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PANEL MOOTS ATM FEE FOR WITHDRAWALS ABOVE ₹5,000

An RBI committee has recommended charging customers for every cash withdrawal of over ₹5,000 to make ATMs viable

COST OF OPERATING ATMS SURGING

The committee led by VG Kannan, a former chief executive of the Indian Banks' Association, recommended the action in October last year. The aim was to discourage people from withdrawing large amounts of cash from ATMs. It noted that the cost of operating ATMs has gone up, while the cap on customer usage fee and bank interchange fee have remained the same

RBI KEEPS MUM ON PANEL'S REPORT

- The panel proposed raising interchange fee—the charge a bank must pay when its customers draw cash from other bank ATMs—by ₹2 in centres with over a million people, and by ₹3 in others
- The panel's report came to light through an RTI reply. It's not clear if RBI is planning to act on the recommendations |P10

₹75,000
IS THE AVERAGE MONTHLY COST OF OPERATING AN ATM

None intruded, no post captured: Modi

Says India has capability to ensure that none can eye even an inch of land; all parties for united front on security

MANISH ANAND @New Delhi

FOUR days after the violent stand-off in the Galwan Valley in East Ladakh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said "neither is anyone inside our territory nor is any of our post captured," ruling out transgression by the Chinese armed forces. Reassuring the political leadership, Modi said India has the capability to ensure that none can eye even an inch of the land, as the Armed Forces now enjoy the capability to move to any of the sectors simultaneously.

"Twenty of our jawans were martyred, but those who dared Bharat Mata have been taught a lesson," the PM said in his concluding address at an all-party meeting. Speaking at the end of the meeting attended by the chiefs of about 20 political parties, Modi stressed that the infrastructure development in the border areas will continue, while crediting it to the work done in the past five years for the speedy movement of the Armed Forces. "Those (the Chinese soldiers) who were never questioned or stopped are now warned and stopped by our jawans at multiple sectors," said Modi.

While the Congress chief Sonia Gandhi sought to probe the government on finer details, including if there was an intelligence failure, the leaders of other parties struck a united stance to stand with the government, besides offering suggestions, which included economic and diplomatic pressure on Beijing.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi making her point on the Galwan clash as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and CMs of Telangana and Bihar listen | PTI

QUIET VISIT OF AIR CHIEF TO LEH, SRINAGAR

After Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhadauria made a quiet visit to airbases in Leh and Srinagar, frontline aircraft Su-30MKI and Apache attack helicopters were seen flying in and around Leh on Friday. The IAF Chief visited the Leh airbase on June 17 and flew to Srinagar the next day. He is learnt to have checked the operational readiness of all platforms that have been moved to the area in view of the Chinese aggression along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh | P7

But strategic policy hawk Brahma Chellaney took a sharp line. "Does Modi's statement signal India is willing to live with China's forcible change of the status quo in the Galwan Valley and at Lake Pangong?" he tweeted.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh firmly rejected allegations of intelligence failure, while External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar shared an overview of the diplomatic outreach to prevail upon Beijing to disengage from the Valley.

Acknowledging the national anguish, Modi said the entire country is hurt and angry at the steps taken by China at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), adding that the Army has been given full freedom to take necessary steps. He said while India wants peace, upholding its sovereignty is the top priority.

Senior leaders like Mamata Banerjee (TMC), Nitish Kumar, JD(U), Sharad Pawar (NCP), Uddhav Thackeray (Shiv Sena), Pinaki Mishra (BJD) and M K Stalin (DMK) made a case for a united political response on matters of national security.

MORE REPORTS: P7

Tone down nationalistic talk: Gowda

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@Bengaluru

ON the day when Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired an all-party meeting to discuss the bilateral tension at Galwan Valley along the India-China border, former prime minister and JDS supremo H D Deve Gowda said the meeting will be fruitful only if Opposition leaders are given detailed, truthful information about the ground situation.

In a detailed six-point statement, Gowda stressed the need to tone down nationalist rhetoric to ensure that matters are not escalated. "This is not the time for a language of provocation and revenge. Media outlets spreading fake information and cheap rhetoric endanger the lives of our soldiers and diplomatic staff. Social media retribution is of particular concern. By this, I do not mean that critical mainstream opinions, analysis and reporting should be stopped," Gowda said in his statement.

Appealing to the opposition to not use intemperate language at a time when cooperation is important, Deve Gowda said domestic politics and national security interests cannot be equated. He, however, stressed that it doesn't mean that the government should not be questioned.

CONTINUED ON: P5

CONG CLEARS RAJASTHAN TEST

KARNATAKA (4 seats)
●BJP - 2 seats ●Congress - 1 seat ●JDS - 1 seat

MEGHALAYA (1 seat)
● National People's Party - 1 seat

MIZORAM (1 seat)
● Mizo National Front - 1 seat

RAJASTHAN (3 seats)
●Congress - 2 seats ●BJP - 1 seat

AP (4 seats)
● YSR Congress Party - 4 seats

J'KHAND (2 seats)
● JMM - 1 seat
● BJP - 1 seat

MP (3 seats)
● BJP - 2 seats
● Cong - 1 seat

MANIPUR (1 seat)
● BJP - 1 seat

BJP set to up its tally in Rajya Sabha, counting halted in Gujarat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ New Delhi

BARRING some drama in Manipur and Gujarat, biennial Rajya Sabha elections for 19 seats in 10 states concluded smoothly, with the ruling BJP strengthening its position in the House on Friday. The NDA now will have about 100 MPs of its own in the Upper House, up from its current tally of 91.

In Gujarat, which had witnessed defection ahead of the elections, the Congress demanded that the Election Commission invalidate two BJP votes on different grounds. In all, four seats are up for grabs and the defection in Gujarat was aimed at snatching away one of the two seats the Congress was hoping to win. Counting was halted as last reports came in.

In the run-up to the polls, there was high drama in states like Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh as well. However, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance won two seats in Madhya Pradesh, one each in Rajasthan, Manipur and Jharkhand. It has already won two seats in Karnataka and one in Arunachal Pradesh. The Congress managed to keep Rajasthan out of trouble, winning two seats. It also got one in MP, besides already pocketing a seat in Karnataka. The YSRCP Congress swept the results in Andhra Pradesh winning all four seats at stake.

In the North East, Titular king Leishemba Sanajaoba of the BJP won the lone Rajya Sabha seat in Manipur, while two other seats in Meghalaya and Mizoram went to ruling National People's Party (NPP) and Mizo National Front (MNF), respectively.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi got a perfect gift from Rajasthan on his 50th birthday, as Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot managed to limit the BJP to just one seat amid allegations of horse-trading. Both the Congress nominees, K C Venugopal and Neeraj Dangi won impressively, while the BJP could ensure a win only for Rajendra Gehlot.

Boycott? Chinese smartphone sells in a flash

ARSHAD KHAN @New Delhi

AMID appeals to boycott Chinese products after 20 Indian soldiers were killed in clashes in eastern Ladakh's Galwan area, Chinese premium smartphone-maker OnePlus saw its latest model — OnePlus 8 Pro — sell off within minutes in India after its online sales opened on Thursday.

Although it is not unusual for OnePlus products to be sold out within minutes of their launch, there were speculations that the Galwan incident would take the shine off the brand's latest offering.

Not just OnePlus, but another Chinese brand, Xiaomi, said two of its laptop models sold-out in India within two days of their launch on Wednesday.

Analysts say that without a viable replacement, the demand for Chinese smartphones is unlikely to take a hit.

However, that has not calmed the nerves of some Chinese firms that have begun showcasing the Indian aspects of their products. Realme India CEO Madhav Sheth this week said, "I can proudly say Realme is an Indian startup." Although the company made its success in India, it is owned by China-based BBK Electronics Corporation.

Meanwhile, hoping to revive their fortunes, Indian smartphone-makers like Micromax are gearing up for a comeback.

DRAGON DARE

Ballari denim may not have China's blue

KIRAN BALANNANAVAR @Ballari

WITH the chorus to boycott Chinese products rising, factories producing jeans and other denim apparel in Ballari are now scouting to import raw materials from other countries.

Ballari, with over 500 jeans factories, is a hub for denim production. All these years, these units have heavily depended on Chinese raw materials as they found it to be a cheaper alternative to importing from other countries.

But the ongoing tension between India and China at the LAC has set those in the jeans sector thinking. Stating that national interest is more important than their own business, denim factory owners here have decided against buying raw materials from China, choosing instead to import from South Korea and Taiwan, even if it means paying a little more.

'Pollux' Mallikarjuna, a factory owner, said, "In any situation, our country comes first for us because it provides us with everything. The recent attitude of China is unacceptable. If we completely stop buying raw materials from there, they will realise India's power. Hence, we are thinking of buying raw materials from elsewere."

An industry observer said the denim's indigo colour is available for cheap in China, which is imported by Ballari's factories to the tune of Rs 1 crore each month. P10

Tech that, K'taka top in Covid fight: Centre

ANUSHA RAVI @Bengaluru

KARNATAKA's technology-based approach in managing the Covid-19 crisis has earned it recognition from the Union Government. Living up to its reputation of being the IT capital of the country, Karnataka's use of web-based applications, distant monitoring mechanisms, tech-savvy contact tracing and citizen survey initiatives have caught the Centre's attention so much so that the Union Health Ministry has asked other states to emulate such best practices.

The Centre on Friday appreciated Karnataka for its 'Whole of Government' approach and use of technology in Covid-19 management. The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting put out a statement asking other states to adopt such measures to their local context and replicate them for better management of the pandemic. The appreciation comes barely days after BJP national president J P Nadda and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in succession lauded the state's use of technology in tracing, monitoring and assisting citizens as part of Covid-19 containment measures.

"Karnataka's management of #COVID19 is lauded by Union Govt as a role model. At the core of our success is Good Governance with well-crafted policies & meticulous implementation using technology. Congrats to our Corona Warriors & Team Karnataka!" (sic) tweeted Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa. P5

HIGH DRAMA

Alarms go off at CM's home office after virus scare

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @Bengaluru

IRONICAL as it may seem when most commercial and business establishments are opening up after Unlock 1.0, many government offices, including the Chief Minister's home office 'Krishna', and the Vikasa Soudha, which houses the offices of many ministers and top officials, were closed for sanitisation on Friday. The husband of a woman police constable posted at 'Krishna', tested positive for Covid-19, whereas her test results are awaited. He is attached to the Central Crime Branch police.

As a result, all of the CM's Friday's programmes, including the inauguration of police quarters, a traffic police station and wireless training schools through video-conference, and a meeting with officials were moved to Vidhana Soudha.

Health Minister B Sriramulu's official residence was also sealed and only a limited number of security personnel remained. The minister took the precautionary measures as he had visited the CM's home office recently.

A BBMP worker sprays disinfectant near the CM's home office 'Krishna' on Friday | EXPRESS

The office of the Food and Civil Supplies Department on the ground floor of Vikasa Soudha was sealed for two days after a staffer tested positive for coronavirus on Wednesday. However, on Thursday, the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms issued a notification ordering sealing of the entire Vikasa Soudha for a day on Friday, and the staff was told to work from home. P5

EXPRESS READ

Six more militants killed in two encounters in Jammu and Kashmir

Srinagar: Six more militants were killed in two separate encounters with security forces in Pulwama and Shopian districts of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, taking the number of ultras killed in the overnight operations to eight, officials said. While two militants were killed in the Pulwama encounter, four were killed in Shopian on Friday. The militants belonged to Hizbul Mujahideen and Lashkar-e-Toiba, they said.

Reliance is now net-debt free after Rs 1.69 lakh cr fund raising: Ambani

New Delhi: Billionaire Mukesh Ambani on Friday announced that his oil-to-telecom conglomerate Reliance Industries is now net-debt free, months ahead of its March 2021 target after raising a record Rs 1.69 lakh crore from stake sales and rights issue in less than two months time. Reliance had a net debt of Rs 1,61,035 crore as on March 31, 2020. "With these investments, RIL has become net-debt free," he said. P10

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